



**The United States and Southeast Asia:  
Developments, Trends, and Policy Choices**

**Statement by Deputy Assistant Secretary Eric G. John  
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Before the House Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific**

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Mister Chairman, Members of the Subcommittee, I am very pleased to have this opportunity to speak to you about current U.S. interests and foreign policy priorities in Southeast Asia. This Administration is working aggressively to take advantage of significant opportunities to advance American interests in the region. Our goals are clear: we want to see a Southeast Asia that is a partner in the promotion of democracy and human rights and an engine of economic growth; a group of nations whose varied ethnic and religious groups live together and flourish in peace; countries that cooperate fully with us in battling the evils of terrorism, proliferation, and infectious diseases; and a region where the United States plays a positive role, in harmony with other powers.

There can be little doubt that Southeast Asia is -- and will remain -- of the greatest importance to the United States. The region's combined gross domestic product is over \$750 billion and is growing quickly. U.S. two-way trade with the states of Southeast Asia totaled over \$136 billion in 2004 and continues to grow. Home to over five hundred million people, Southeast Asia is a multi-billion dollar market for U.S. agricultural products and supports, directly and indirectly, millions of American jobs in all sectors of our economy. It is the fifth largest market for U.S. exports. U.S. direct investment in the area reached over \$90 billion in 2003.

In addition to its economic importance, Southeast Asia holds great strategic importance to our national interests. It sits astride the sea routes from the Persian Gulf and Indian Ocean to the Pacific, through which much of the world's trade and energy shipments flow and through which our assistance to numerous other friends and allies passes. Our interests in the region are bolstered as well by the presence of two of our treaty allies -- Thailand and the Philippines -- and a free trade partner -- Singapore.

Achieving our goals in the region will require intensive, active engagement at all levels. Fortunately, there are some positive trends that present us with significant opportunities to move forward, and we are doing all we can to take advantage of them.

### **Spread of Democracy**

The most important and encouraging trend in recent years has been the strengthening of democracy. In the last few years, elections have taken place not only in established democracies -- the Philippines, Malaysia, and Thailand -- but also in newly democratized Indonesia, the world's most populous Muslim-majority nation, and in East Timor, a new nation and new democracy. As democracy has taken on deeper roots, it has brought with it an enhanced respect for civil society and the rule of law.

### **Increased Economic Opportunities and Greater Prosperity**

Concurrent with the spread of democracy, prosperity is growing throughout the region. Regional economies are moving toward greater economic openness, lower trade barriers, and regional integration. Income levels have climbed, and extreme poverty has generally declined. Southeast Asian nations are looking increasingly beyond their borders for markets, investment capital, higher education, and ideas.

### **Increased Regional Cooperation**

We are also seeing policies and initiatives to expand regional integration. This is happening politically, economically, and culturally, both bilaterally and through the region's major institutions such as ASEAN, APEC, and the ASEAN Regional Forum.

### **Increased Security and Stability**

Southeast Asia is an area largely at peace. The region has not seen a single major military conflict for more than 25 years. There has been widespread rejection of terrorism, and we are working effectively with governments to enhance our mutual security. With some notable exceptions, governments and people have recognized the advantage of resolving differences through dialogue and the ballot box and of maintaining political stability as an essential ingredient of economic prosperity.

### **Increased Attention to Global Issues**

We are also seeing increased attention paid to global issues. Encouraged by U.S. leadership and with our cooperation, governments throughout the region are beginning to work to combat human trafficking, environmental degradation, infectious diseases, narcotics trafficking, and international crime, while advancing human rights and religious freedom.

### **Challenges**

In emphasizing these positive trends and opportunities, I don't want to minimize the challenges, including the continuing danger of terrorism, the negative trends in Burma, and the risk of the spread of infectious diseases, most notably avian influenza.

### **Terrorism**

Although Southeast Asia has generally rejected the extremist forms of Islam that spawn terrorists, our challenge remains to root out all vestiges of this menace. There is a growing realization throughout the region that terrorism threatens all governments and that the best way to confront this threat is by working together. Regional capacity building and cooperation offers us the opportunity to find the terrorists wherever they hide and bring them to justice.

### **Burma**

One country of the region stands out as moving in a direction antithetical to our interests: Burma. The Burmese regime remains exceptionally repressive and is becoming even harsher in its treatment of its people. Burma's failure to cooperate with the international community is reprehensible. The regime has set back international efforts to provide humanitarian assistance to a population that is in dire need.

We continue to look for ways to put the deteriorating situation there before the international community, including within the UN system. In June, we raised Burma during Security Council consultations under “other matters.” The United Kingdom, France, Greece, Denmark and Romania supported this effort. We are also working with our partners to support efforts to place Burma on next month’s Security Council agenda. Burma's junta must take steps that allow the international community to put relations on a normal footing, such as bringing its deplorable human rights practices into conformity with international standards.

We remain deeply concerned about the safety and welfare of Aung San Suu Kyi and other political prisoners. We continue to press the Burmese leadership to release them immediately and unconditionally and to engage the democratic opposition and ethnic minority political groups in a meaningful dialogue. We are working tirelessly with our partners to help the Burmese people achieve genuine national reconciliation and democracy in Burma.

### **Pandemic Disease and Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza**

As we strengthen our commitments to fighting malaria and AIDS, we must also prepare for new threats to public health such as Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI). I'm sure you are well aware that humans have died in countries of the region after contracting HPAI from birds and that the mortality rate is unusually high. HPAI has already devastated the poultry industry in the affected countries. If left unchallenged, this virus could become the first pandemic of the 21st century.

President Bush announced a new International Partnership on Avian and Pandemic Influenza at the United Nations General Assembly meeting earlier this month aimed at enhancing preparedness, prevention, response, and containment activities. The Partnership will improve global readiness by elevating the issue on national agendas; coordinating efforts among donor and affected nations; mobilizing and leveraging resources; increasing transparency in disease reporting and surveillance; and building capacity to identify, contain, and respond to a pandemic influenza. We are asking affected and at-risk countries to strive for cooperation across sectors and ministries and with international health organizations to prevent an influenza pandemic and to mitigate its effects should one occur. We are asking potential donor countries to coordinate their activities to most effectively

make use of limited resources and avoid duplication. We are urging all countries to place influenza pandemic prevention, preparedness, and response as high priorities.

Many nations have already joined this partnership, including Cambodia, Malaysia, Singapore, and Vietnam.

### **China in Southeast Asia**

An important factor for the U.S. in Southeast Asia is the influence of China in the region. China's rapid economic development over the past two decades has brought new opportunities and challenges to the countries of Southeast Asia. While most have benefited from the expanded trade and investment opportunities that China's growing economy represents -- China's trade with ASEAN grew 30% last year alone -- there has been considerable debate in Asia over how China's economic rise will change the political landscape in the region. China has focused on developing robust trade and investment relationships in the region to fuel its own domestic development. At the same time, China is also clearly interested in matching its economic power with political influence, thereby giving it an opportunity to advance its own interests in the region. Our goal is to help China increasingly identify these interests in ways that support and advance U.S. objectives. Deputy Secretary Zoellick is doing just that in his ongoing Senior Dialogue, established by agreement between the President and President Hu at APEC last year. U/S Dobriansky's Global Issues Forum also seeks to respond to China's emergence as a global player by demonstrating cooperation on a host of transnational issues. It is important to remember in this context that America's role in the region has increased at the same time China has sought to invest further in Southeast Asia. We play, and will continue to play, an essential role in the region, built on our alliance relationships, our active participation in ASEAN and APEC fora, and the access we provide to our open and transparent markets that helps drive both China's and the region's economies.

### **ACHIEVING OUR POLICY GOALS IN THE REGION**

Earlier this year, Secretary Rice articulated our goals in the region: security, opportunity, freedom. Against this backdrop of favorable trends and challenging issues, we seek to promote policies to achieve the Secretary's goals through strong **multilateral** and **bilateral** engagement.

## **MULTILATERAL ENGAGEMENT**

Our challenge is to open markets, facilitate trade, promote transparency, and fight corruption. We have reached out bilaterally to the dynamic economies of the region and are working effectively through APEC and other regional multilateral fora to create opportunities for American business and enhance the prosperity of the region.

### **ASEAN**

All Southeast Asian countries except the newly founded East Timor are members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations -- ASEAN. Strengthening relations with ASEAN is of vital importance to the United States because ASEAN serves as a force to promote stability and prosperity in the Asia-Pacific region. Through ASEAN, neighboring countries -- diverse and sometimes with historical tensions -- are joined together with the common aim of achieving peace, stability, democracy, and prosperity in the region. The United States has a strong national interest in working with ASEAN. We are cooperating to advance our common interests across a full range of economic, political, and security issues, including tackling transnational problems such as terrorism, infectious diseases like Avian Flu and HIV/AIDS, trafficking in persons, and narcotics trafficking. In addition, since October 2002 we have been working under President Bush's Enterprise for ASEAN Initiative to enhance our economic ties with ASEAN.

One area in which we would like to see greater ASEAN effectiveness, though, is Burma. Our view, frankly, is that ASEAN has not done all it could or should to promote democracy. We have worked with ASEAN members to promote democracy in Burma, and we felt ASEAN made the right decision by having Burma relinquish its turn to be the Chair of ASEAN in 2006-2007. More needs to be done, however.

We will build on our solid relations over the next year to develop a comprehensive Enhanced Partnership with ASEAN. This Partnership was proposed by ASEAN last June because they too are interested in putting their relations with us on a par with their relations with China, Japan, Korea, and India. More specific elements of the Enhanced Partnership are now being developed.

### **APEC**

The United States is a leader in APEC, a forum that brings together 21 economies from both sides of the Pacific, including the Southeast Asian nations of Thailand, the Philippines, Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore, Vietnam, and Brunei. Since APEC's founding in 1989, its work has focused on expanding trade, investment, growth, and cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region. Support for trade liberalization by advancing progress in the WTO Doha Development Agenda continues to be the top U.S. goal in APEC in 2005. The June meeting of APEC trade ministers and the September meeting of APEC finance ministers both gave the process a good push, and this year's APEC meetings are timed perfectly for APEC to continue to lend its weight to this cause. APEC Leaders and Ministers, when they meet in November, can help pave the path to a successful WTO Ministerial in Hong Kong.

U.S. business executives routinely list piracy of intellectual property as one of the greatest challenges their companies face. In response to this concern, the United States has also made Intellectual Property Rights a major goal in APEC for 2005. Protecting the public from fraud and often even physical harm caused by counterfeit or pirated goods is increasingly seen as a security goal as well.

Recent tragic events have led the APEC leaders to recognize that there can be no prosperity without security. They have dedicated APEC not only to promoting the prosperity of the APEC economies, but also to ensuring the security of people in the APEC region. The United States is pursuing security initiatives in the context of APEC ranging from counter-terrorism and non-proliferation to pandemic and disaster preparedness.

### **ASEAN Regional Forum**

The ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) is the only multilateral institution in the Asia-Pacific region that is devoted solely to security issues. ASEAN created the ARF and remains its driving force. The United States was a founding member and remains deeply involved. U.S. participation in the ARF is both an opportunity to articulate and pursue our security interests and a mode of engagement with ASEAN.

The ARF is becoming an increasingly active and vital body with a stronger institutional character and a deeper level of engagement in important security issues such as maritime security, nonproliferation of WMD, peace arrangements and counterterrorism. This year, the U.S. has a chance to

demonstrate its continued ARF commitment and engagement when it co-chairs, with the Philippines, the ARF's main working-level gathering, the Inter-sessional Support Group. We are preparing to host a meeting of this group in Honolulu in mid-October and hope to use this opportunity to promote cooperation in areas like Avian Influenza and to press for a greater focus on concrete results from ARF events.

ARF participants are increasingly willing to look at sensitive issues of importance to the United States, as evidenced by ARF approval of a U.S.-sponsored seminar on missile defense that will be held in Bangkok, Thailand, October 6-7. Assistant Secretary of State Stephen Rademaker will lead the interagency U.S. delegation to this event, which aims to highlight the threat of missile proliferation and the contribution missile defense can make to counter that threat.

I should note here that at its 12th Meeting in Vientiane, Laos, this past July, ARF accepted East Timor as its 25th member. We welcome this development, which we view as another sign of East Timor's increasing integration into the region and the international community.

### **Regional Security**

The Southeast Asia region continues to be an attractive theater of operations for al-Qaida-affiliated terrorist organizations such as Jemaah Islamiya and the Abu Sayyaf Group. Because terrorism in Southeast Asia is a regional problem, we are working regionally, as well as bilaterally, to support counterterrorism training and intergovernmental cooperation. The ASEAN community has vigorously supported expansion of regional counterterrorism capacities as envisioned in the 2001 ASEAN Declaration on Joint Action to Counter Terrorism, and the U.S.-ASEAN Counterterrorism Work Plan is the blueprint for U.S. engagement on this effort. ASEAN members have reached out to neighboring countries to expand cooperation in areas of information exchange and law enforcement cooperation, as well as increasing counterterrorism finance and law enforcement capacity-building efforts through training and education. At a meeting with ASEAN Senior Officials in June, we agreed on a series of steps to move forward with practical implementation of the U.S.-ASEAN Counterterrorism Work Plan. Through centers like the Southeast Asia Regional Center for Counterterrorism in Malaysia and the U.S.-Thailand International Law Enforcement Academy in Bangkok, we cooperate by supporting counterterrorism training for law enforcement officers throughout the region.

Recently established as a joint project by Australia and Indonesia, the Jakarta Center for Law Enforcement Cooperation presents another valuable venue for cooperative capacity building in the region.

Numerous U.S. cooperative initiatives in the region aim to improve education systems, increase employment opportunities, and enhance understanding of U.S. policies and objectives. Throughout Southeast Asia our Embassies are expanding cultural outreach and exchange programs, frequently focusing on moderate Muslim groups and organizations to reduce alienation and anti-U.S. attitudes. Similarly, police training programs and support for structural reforms aim to reduce the incidence of police corruption and the consequent public disillusion and lack of support for national law enforcement efforts. Our ultimate goal is a significant degradation of terrorist capabilities, elimination of sanctuaries, institutionalized regional cooperation, effective legal systems, and progress on contributing factors, including poverty and limited employment prospects, poor education, and corruption.

We are also continuing to look for ways to help regional states that have sovereign responsibilities for ensuring security of the vital Strait of Malacca trade route to enhance their maritime law enforcement capabilities and cooperation.

## **BILATERAL**

In parallel with our multilateral engagement efforts, we are advancing our bilateral ties with the countries in the region.

### **New Opportunities**

#### **Indonesia**

We have a remarkable window of opportunity with Indonesia. In the seven years since authoritarian President Suharto resigned, Indonesia has undergone a democratic transformation. It is the world's third largest democracy and the largest majority Muslim country, with more people of Islamic faith than Egypt, Iran, Iraq and Saudi Arabia combined. Last year, an estimated 60 percent of eligible voters directly elected President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, who seeks to reform and modernize Indonesia's government institutions, fight systemic corruption, and reduce poverty. We

have established a productive dialogue under our bilateral Trade and Investment Framework Agreement. President Yudhoyono has recognized the need to make changes necessary to attract foreign direct investment to partner in development of infrastructure projects and fuel needed economic growth. President Yudhoyono is committed to military reform, including increasing civilian control over the military, and improving budget transparency. President Yudhyono's administration has also signed an historic peace agreement that we hope will end the longstanding conflict in Aceh.

There is no question that President Yudhoyono is leading a new era in Indonesia, one that promises to separate Indonesia from its repressive past. This does not mean, however, that challenges do not remain. As our 2004 Human Rights Report indicates, Indonesia's human rights record has been poor, and there is much to be done, particularly in the area of accountability for abuses committed by members of the security services. But we cannot overlook the flourishing of democracy. We now have an opportunity to resolve -- not ignore -- our differences with Indonesia, while strengthening our partnership with this tremendously important and dynamic country.

## **Malaysia**

Prime Minister Abdullah Badawi has described U.S.-Malaysian relations as "the best they have ever been," and we are confident that they will improve even further in the years ahead. Prime Minister Abdullah has pledged a more open, consultative style of government, free from the strident anti-Western rhetoric of his predecessor. He has articulated a modern and tolerant vision of Islam -- Islam Hadhari (literally "civilizational Islam") that helps shape Malaysia's domestic and foreign policies. Malaysia currently chairs the Organization of the Islamic Conference, and we look forward to working with Malaysia to build mutual understanding between Islamic communities and Western cultures. Malaysia has recently shown an increased willingness to work with its neighbors to provide air patrols of the critical Malacca Strait. We welcome this move and look forward to working with Malaysia on this effort and other cooperative efforts to improve regional security and nonproliferation.

## **Strengthening of Alliances and Partnerships**

President Bush has emphasized the strengthening and revitalization of alliances, and in East Asia, alliance sustenance is work that is never complete. The ties we have with our two key allies -- The Philippines and Thailand -- and one key partner -- Singapore -- have been improved significantly since 2001, but the challenge of continuing this progress will occupy us in the coming years.

### **The Philippines**

We continue to strengthen our bilateral ties with the Philippines, particularly in the Global War on Terrorism. The Philippines was among the first coalition partners to send forces to Iraq, and in 2003 we designated it a Major Non-NATO Ally. While we were disappointed at its subsequent withdrawal from Iraq, our alliance remains strong, and we continue to cooperate on a broad range of issues. We are supporting the ongoing Mindanao peace process between the Philippines government and Muslim insurgents, particularly through USAID programs designed to make Mindanao a welcoming place for development and investment, not terrorists. We have also offered the support of the U.S. Institute for Peace to assist the peace process. We are strengthening our defense ties through the jointly funded Philippine Defense Reform program, a comprehensive multi-year effort designed to enhance the capabilities of the Philippine armed forces. President Arroyo's recent impeachment hearings prove that much more must be done to promote good governance and transparency. We are working together in multilateral fora such as the UN, where just last week the Security Council -- under Philippine chairmanship -- unanimously adopted UNSCR 1624 against the incitement of terrorism. We also look forward to working closely with the Philippines when it assumes the Chairmanship of ASEAN in 2006.

We have a significant trade and investment relationship with the Philippines, and its economic growth of 5-6% in recent years has been a bright spot. However, the Philippines faces some major economic challenges. To achieve fiscal sustainability, it must modernize its tax and customs bureaucracies and undertake effective anti-corruption measures. The Philippines imports over 90 percent of its oil, and higher oil prices mean higher inflation as well as constraints on GDP growth and job creation. Rising interest rates on its large debt stock signal further challenges ahead on the financial and fiscal front.

To help meet these challenges, in addition to our USAID programs we are initiating further concrete engagement on anti-corruption efforts and fiscal reform through the Millennium Challenge Account Threshold Country Program. Through our bilateral Trade and Investment Council, we have also encouraged the Philippines to liberalize trade.

The Philippines is an Intellectual Property Rights Priority Watch List country, and we have intensified our work with them in strengthening Intellectual Property Rights enforcement. The Philippine government has shown leadership and taken a more activist approach on Intellectual Property Rights issues by increasing the number of raids on pirating operations and retail outlets. However, progress on arrests and prosecutions remains difficult because of serious bottlenecks in the judicial sector, which they are also attempting to address.

### **Thailand**

We have steadily strengthened our bilateral relationship with Thailand over the past several years. In the war against terrorism, Thailand has also been a staunch partner and ally, contributing troops to coalition efforts in Afghanistan and Iraq. Thailand hosts Cobra Gold, our largest multi-national military exercise in Asia, and provides crucial access to its facilities, including allowing the U.S. Government to use Utapao Naval Air Station as the hub for regional relief operations in response to the December 26, 2004 tsunami that devastated the region. The President has designated Thailand, too, as a Major Non-NATO Ally. Our economic and trade relationship grows stronger every day. We are negotiating a Free Trade Agreement and, on September 19, signed an Open Skies Agreement to liberalize passenger air travel between our countries. With respect to the situation in Southern Thailand, we continue to closely follow the violence and other developments in that region. We are encouraged by the work of the National Reconciliation Commission and their efforts to protect human rights.

One issue on which we disagree is our policy toward Burma. Thailand's continuing engagement strategy with Burma has achieved little progress in addressing Burma's narcotics trafficking, trafficking in persons, cross-border migration, and other issues. We will continue to press the Thai to use their influence with the junta to push for positive change.

### **Singapore**

President Bush and Singapore Prime Minister Lee signed a bilateral Strategic Framework Agreement in July, reflecting our shared desire to address such threats as terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Though not a treaty ally, Singapore is a strong supporter of a continued U.S. security presence in Southeast Asia, which it sees as a prerequisite to continued regional stability. The Strategic Framework Agreement builds upon and expands a robust, wide-ranging security and economic partnership between our nations, also reflected in the U.S.-Singapore Free Trade Agreement, our first in Southeast Asia. In the year after the FTA took effect in January 2004, U.S. exports to Singapore increased 18%. In fact, the value of U.S. exports to Singapore, which has a population of only 4 million, total more than half that of our exports to China. Our relationship with Singapore is among our most productive in all of Asia; we share many strategic perspectives and have very successfully turned this shared vision into practical, concrete achievements. Singapore's contribution to the Global War on Terror through its military forces in Iraq is further evidence of our shared strategic perspective and close cooperation.

### **Promoting closer ties with other countries of the region**

#### **Vietnam**

Vietnamese Prime Minister Phan Van Khai's visit to Washington in June and his meeting with President Bush were the culmination of a decade-long effort to increase bilateral understanding and cooperation. We now share a robust \$6.4 billion trade relationship with Vietnam, good cooperation in achieving the fullest possible accounting for Americans missing from the Vietnam War, increasing educational and cultural exchanges, and an expanding mutual effort to combat trade in illicit narcotics. We have also concluded an International Military Education and Training (IMET) agreement, which reflects Vietnam's decision to establish closer defense ties with the United States. The United States supports Vietnam's WTO accession on the basis of sound commercial terms and full implementation of WTO rules and obligations. We remain concerned over the Government's poor human rights record, specifically in the area of international religious freedom. The last U.S.-Vietnam Human Rights Dialogue was held in 2002, but the U.S. Government refused for over two years to schedule another round of dialogue because of the Government of Vietnam's failure to make tangible progress. However, recent positive steps by the Government of Vietnam have led to scheduling a new round of dialogue, tentatively in the fall of 2005. Vietnam is also emerging as a

regional player, a role that will be increasingly important to U.S. interests in East Asia in the coming years.

### **Cambodia**

We have enjoyed excellent cooperation with Cambodia in combating terrorism and in achieving the fullest possible accounting for Americans missing from the Vietnam War. We have serious human rights and democracy concerns, but continue to press for positive change. We urge the Government to strengthen Cambodia's democratic institutions, fight corruption, and respect basic human rights.

### **Laos**

We enjoy good cooperation with the Lao in achieving the fullest possible accounting for Americans missing from the Vietnam War and seek new areas of engagement in connection with our Bilateral Trade Agreement. We continue to call on Laos to improve its respect for internationally recognized human rights, particularly vis-à-vis its ethnic minority populations.

### **Brunei**

Despite its small size, Brunei has been a valuable partner in promoting regional peace and stability. Its armed forces helped deliver relief to Aceh in the wake of last year's tsunami, and Brunei contributed to the international monitoring team in the Philippine island of Mindanao. Our militaries cooperate closely in exercises, and we share an interest in expanding economic opportunity and prosperity through free trade. We continue to work under our 2001 bilateral Trade and Investment Framework Agreement to improve our economic relationship.

### **East Timor**

East Timor is a strong supporter and friend of the United States, which remains one of the new nation's largest bilateral donors -- almost \$25 million in total assistance in FY2004. Our strategic objective is to help assist East Timor in becoming a stable, prosperous, and vibrant democracy.

### **Tsunami Relief**

I have reserved for last the dramatic refocusing of American attention on the region as a result of the tsunami disaster of December 26, compounded by the massive earthquake of March 28 that caused further destruction in Indonesia. Drawing upon the \$656 million that the Congress has

appropriated for the Tsunami Relief and Reconstruction Fund, we have supported and continue to support reconstruction efforts. These include rebuilding damaged infrastructure, such as the reconstruction of up to 240 kilometers of road and 110 bridges to re-open the Banda Aceh-Meulaboh road and facilities at the Syiah Kuala University in Banda Aceh. We cannot yet predict the long-term impact our humanitarian assistance will have on our relations with the affected countries and their neighbors, but our response was massive, and we can look back on this as one of the proudest moments of our history. We will continue to work closely with the countries concerned and the international community on long-term reconstruction assistance.

## **Conclusion**

As I said at the beginning, Southeast Asia is undergoing dramatic change. We hope that our involvement will move the countries of the region toward the goals articulated by Secretary Rice: security, opportunity, freedom. We would like to see in the region sustained economic growth, advancement toward full democracy and respect for human rights, and cooperation in counterterrorism and nonproliferation. And we would like all of the Southeast Asian governments to do what some are already doing -- allowing a varied tapestry of ethnicities and religions to flourish and prosper within their national borders. The trends in the region appear to be moving in these positive directions, and we will do all we can to ensure they continue.